

Message Text

PAGE 01 VIENTI 07362 270817Z

21 S13
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W
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R 270632Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6386
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 7362
EXDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, LA
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS ON FUTURE AID TO LAOS

1. MR. ROBERT NOOTER OF AID/W, USAID DIRECTOR MANN AND
I CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER, SOUVANNA PHOUMA, TODAY
FOR A REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AND TO PERMIT MR. NOOTER
TO OBTAIN SOUVANNA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE AID RELATIONSHIPS
LAOS WILL HAVE ONCE THE PGNU IS FORMED.

2. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM MR. NOOTER, SOUVANNA
EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE U.S. AID TO LAOS WOULD
CONTINUE MUCH AS BEFORE FOLLOWING THE INTEGRATION OF
THE PATHET LAO INTO THE GOVERNMENT. AS HE HAS ON
PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, SOUVANNA STATED THAT THE PL WOULD
WELCOME U.S. ASSISTANCE AND THAT HE FORESAW NO
CONCEPTUAL OR OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS. HE RECALLED THAT
PRINCE SOUVANNAVONG HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE U.S.
AS MINISTER OF THE PLAN IN 1962 AND OPINED THAT HE
WOULD DO SO IN THE FUTURE. WITH REGARD TO FEOF HE
STATED THAT THE PL WOULD NOT BE SO SHORT-SIGHTED THAT
THEY WOULD SCUTTLE THIS ESSENTIAL STABILIZATION
MECHANISM.

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EM IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ABOUT COMMUNIST AID,
SOUVANNA STATED THAT HE HAD ASSURANCES FROM THE SOVIETS
(AND HE IMPLIED FROM THE CHINESE) THAT THEY WOULD GIVE
AID TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AFTER THE PGNU IS FORMED.

HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY WOULD IMPROVE WITH THE OPENING UP OF COMMERCE BETWEEN THE TWO ZONES.

4. I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH SOUVANNA ON OCTOBER 30 AND WILL LEAVE THE LETTER ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE WITH HIM AT THAT TIME (DEPTEL 209975). IN THE COURSE OF TODAY'S DISCUSSION, HOWEVER, SOUVANNA COMMENTED THAT THE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCL DID NOT PREVENT THE CONTINUING RECEIPT OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE STATED THAT SUCH ASSISTANCE WAS ESSENTIAL IN THE SHORT-TERM AND UNTIL COMMUNIST INTENTIONS WERE CLEAR.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER INFORMED MR. NOOTER THAT HE HAD HEARD RUMOURS THAT DEVALUATION OF THE KIP MIGHT BE UNDER CONSIDERATION IN WASHINGTON. HE WANTED TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT HE CONSIDERED SUCH A DEVALUATION TO BE EXTREMELY ILL-ADVISED AT THIS TIME AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THIS TOPIC BE DROPPED FOR THE TIME BEING. MR. NOOTER REPLIED THAT THE U.S. HAD NO FIXED VIEWS REGARDING DEVALUATION AND THAT CONSIDERATION OF THIS TOPIC WOULD DEPEND ON FUTURE POLITICAL AND BUDGETARY DEVELOPMENTS. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE LAO PROBLEM WAS BEING CLOSELY WATCHED BY MANY COUNTRIES AND THAT HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE JAPANESE AND OTHERS WOULD MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO LAOS ONCE THE POLITICAL SITUATION WAS CLARIFIED. HE SAID HE EXPECTED PROGRESS TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO BE RESUMED AND WAS CHEERED BY THE FACT THAT PHOUN SIPRASEUTH WOULD BE RETURNING TO VIENTIANE TODAY.

6. COMMENT. AS USUAL SOUVANNA RADIATED CALM OPTIMISM AND IMPERTURABILITY. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT HIS BLAND ASSURANCES THAT THE AMERICAN AID PROGRAM WILL BE VIRTUALLY UNAFFECTED BY THE ASSUMPTION BY THE PATHET LAO OF A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE GOVERNING OF THIS COUNTRY BUT

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THIS IS HIS STANDARD POSITION.
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/T: HANDLED EXDIS PER MR TWOHIE-SSO,

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: Z
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, FOREIGN RELATIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: thigpegh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973VIENTI07362
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750018-1671
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731067/abqcelqa.tel
Line Count: 101
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: thigpegh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Jul-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <27-Nov-2001 by thigpegh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS ON FUTURE AID TO LAOS
TAGS: PGOV, LA, US, (SOUVANNA PHOUМА), (NOOTER, ROBERT)
To: STATE INFO BANGKOK
PHNOM PENH
SAIGON
TOKYO
PARIS
LONDON
CANBERRA

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005